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NEWS



A Utah Air National Guard 151st Air Refueling KC-135 Stratotanker, prepares to refuel a C-17 over the Black Sea. The Utah tankers are currently deployed to Akrotiri Cyprus in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. (Photo by Master Sgt. Mark Savage)

Mobility leadership emphasizes need for more airlift

by Cynthia Bauer
Air Mobility Command Public Affairs

SCOTT AIR FORCE BASE, Ill. (AFPN) – Air Mobility Command planners said the Air Force's strategic airlifters are doing a tremendous job in supporting the global war on terrorism, but more aircraft are still needed to meet long-term U.S. defense needs.

To meet those needs, officials said the Air Force must increase its inventory of C-17 Globemaster IIIs and modernize the C-5 Galaxy.

Airlift capability falls short of the minimum Defense Department requirements set in a comprehensive two-year study of the defense transportation system, called Mobility Requirements Study-2005, said Maj. Gen. Arthur J. Lichte, AMC's director of plans and programs.

The study, which began in 1998, focused on what the DOD needs based on the 2005 military force structure. The report considered major theater war, special operations, and non-warfighting requirements among other criteria.

The study concluded the minimum strategic airlift requirement was 54.5 million ton miles per day by active, reserve component and commercial airliners in the Civil Reserve Airlift Fleet.

Today's capability lies between 45 and 46 million ton miles per day, officials said.

The "MTM/D" is a transportation industry measure of capacity to push cargo in tons, through a distance in miles in a period of time with a given fleet of vehicles. One million ton miles per day would be the equivalent of loading 14 Greyhound buses aboard C-5s and flying them from Washington to Germany in one day.

Lichte said the new mobility demands for homeland defense and the global war on terrorism, when combined with the requirements from the study, could very well cause an increase above the 54.5 benchmark; however, that amount is yet to be determined.

"Since 9-11," he said, "we have been tasked very heavily, and we are doing a lot more than we've ever done before in the airlift business."

The challenge for planners is to determine how to match AMC's capabilities with defense airlift requirements.

"We're looking to fill the gap with more C-17s and modernized C-5s," said Col. Michael Fricano, chief of the studies and analysis division of AMC's plans and programs directorate.

"This year Congress approved procurement of 60 more C-17s, which brings the total number of C-17s to 180, the minimum number just to meet the initial requirements of MRS-05," he said. "But, as we continue to learn the lessons of operations like Allied Force and Enduring Freedom, we see a need for at least 222."

Both the C-5 and the C-17 are necessary to meet airlift requirements, Fricano said.

"We need a mix of both airframes," he said. "The (C-5) can move more cargo over longer distances than the C-17. The C-5 opens at both ends, and can 'kneel' for greater ease and speed in getting cargo and vehicles off the aircraft. The C-17 is a versatile heavy lifter that can provide direct delivery of people and cargo because it can land on short and unimproved runways."

"We have to look at C-5 enhancements and buy more C-17s to improve our overall capability," he said.

While C-17 reliability remains at or near the Air Force wartime standards, Fricano said C-5 reliability has fallen well short of requirements, which is why C-5 modernization is necessary. Programs planned for the C-5 include avionics modernization and re-engining.

"The numbers and models of C-5s to undergo modernization will depend on the success of the testing program," Fricano said. "It will be fiscal year 2005 or 2006 before results are known, with modernization of the fleet beginning in 2007 and beyond. The success of the C-5 modernization programs will ultimately determine the number of additional C-17s we'll need to meet requirements." (Courtesy of AMC News Service)



E-8 promotion rate highest since 1987

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas (AFPN) -- Officials at the Air Force Personnel Center here have announced a 10.09 percent selection rate to senior master sergeant for the 02E8 promotion cycle -- the highest seen since 1987 and an increase from last year's promotion rate of 8.36 percent.

The Air Force selected 1,544 of 15,307 eligible master sergeants for promotion and plans to release its list of selectees March 20. The average selectee has 5.11 years time in grade and 19.73 years time in service.

"Over the past few years, senior master sergeant promotion rates represent a significant improvement when compared to percentages in the early to mid-1990's," officials said.

In 1993 and 1994, selection rates to senior master sergeant were 5.7 and 4.62 percent, respectively.

Officials said promotion rates are projected to remain fairly consistent through 2003 for all grades as the Air Force reaches its goal of increasing the top five enlisted grade mix to 56 percent of the enlisted force.

The Air Force's current promotion plan drives E-5 through E-9 promotion rates upward to fill projected vacancies while increasing the top five grade mix; however, rates for 2004 and beyond show a gradual decline, but remain above promotion opportunities realized throughout the majority of the 1990s.

The 02E8 Senior Master Sergeant Evaluation Board convened Jan. 23 to Feb. 8 here to evaluate individual records of senior master sergeants eligible for promotion.

The average total score of selectees during the cycle was 674.79 points. Average selectee score breakdowns are:

- 36.44 points for time in grade;
- 20.75 points for time in service;
- 134.99 points for performance reports;
- 19.77 points for decorations;
- 68.91 points for the U.S. Air Force Supervisory Examination; and
- 393.93 points for evaluation board score.

Those selected will be promoted to senior master sergeant beginning in April. The complete list of selections will be posted on the AFPC Web page March 21 by 4:30 p.m. CST. The address is <http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/eprom>.

Those promoted to senior master sergeant automatically receive a school quota for the Senior Noncommissioned Officer Academy, officials said. Of those not selected, 360 primaries are scheduled to attend the SNCOA and an additional 720 alternates are selected as backup in the event primaries cannot attend.

Selections are based on a combination of individual board score and supervisory examination. This list will be released in conjunction with the senior master sergeant promotion list.

Specific class dates for primaries are assigned in April, and they will attend SNCOA between January and September 2003. (Courtesy of AFPC News Service)



FEATURE



(Top to bottom) Tech. Sgt. Bradley Card, Airman 1st Class Jeff Pogatchnik, and Staff Sgt. James J. Callari, all from

the 9th Airlift Squadron, load their bags on a C-5 Galaxy prior to a mission. (Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Andrew Svoboda)

Aircrews' traveling lifestyle filled with adventure, stress

*Airman 1st Class Andrew Svoboda
436th AW Public Affairs*

DOVER AIR FORCE BASE, Del. (AMCNS) — “It’s always breakfast whenever you land,” said Airman 1st Class Brian Castillo, a loadmaster from the 3rd Airlift Squadron. “I’ve had breakfast four times in a row before.”

Meal times aren’t the only part of life that changes for aircrew members. In the world of fliers, routine schedules do not exist. There are no eight-hour shifts, no weekends and very little consistency. And this is exactly why they love it.

“Many jobs are routine,” said Tech. Sgt. Wes Askew, a 3rd AS loadmaster. “You do the same thing everyday. In our job, there’s the excitement of going somewhere different, eating something new and never knowing where you’re going to be.”

A minimum crew on a C-5 Galaxy is made up of two pilots, two flight engineers and two loadmasters. These crewmembers are on alert 24 hours a day, and once they receive the call, they have one hour to show up at the squadron packed and ready to go anywhere in the world.

On C-5s, crewmembers don’t usually fly as “hard crews,” meaning the same people don’t always fly together, but that doesn’t mean they’re not close. Fliers are a tight community and when crews are flying, they’re working and living together.

“We have to trust each other with our lives,” said Castillo. “Once we’re in the air, we can’t be thinking about rank. We’re all each other’s right hand.

“On the road, no one goes out by themselves, we stay as a group,” he said. “If we have confidence as a group, there are no barriers when we’re in the air.”

When aircrews fly missions, this is called going “downrange.” There are two main missions aircrews can get assigned. During a routine channel mission, a crew will go downrange for a set period of time with a fixed itinerary. For contingency missions, aircrews get sent to staging bases, and don’t always know where they’ll be sent. They live at these bases for nearly a month, flying missions and returning to the stage base for crew rest.

“A lot of people think it’s vacation time, but once we’re in the stage, we’ve got 12 hours between flying time to sleep and eat,” said Airman 1st Class Tyler Vaughn, loadmaster from the 9th Airlift Squadron. “Sometimes, if there are no planes going out for a couple days, we’ll be released from alert, but that all depends on the mission and situation.”

“Not always knowing where we’re going definitely makes packing a challenge,” said Maj. Mark Gaubert, a C-5 pilot from the 3rd AS.

An even bigger challenge for crewmembers, however, is maintaining a normal family life. With crews often gone between 15 and 20 days a month, many holidays, first days of school and soccer games are missed. The job cannot get done without family support, according to Tech. Sgt. Don Finely, a flight engineer assigned to the 3rd AS.

“We wear the uniform, but spouses do service too,” said Gaubert. During Kosovo, Gaubert was a KC-135 pilot and didn’t see his family for more than 100 days straight. “At retirement ceremonies, you’ll see the military member receiving medals, but the thing that is often overlooked is the spouse who receives recognition for his or her 20 years of having to put up with the service too.”

According to Castillo, who at age 20 just recently married, the job was something both he and his wife had to consider before getting married.

“I asked her if she wanted to get into this lifestyle,” he said. “There are many times I’ve been working and she’s been home with the kids with no relief, keeping the family straight. I am lucky to have a woman who will stand by me.”

Finely also agreed that it takes a special person to put up with the lifestyle.

“All the bad stuff happens when you’re flying,” he said. “The car breaks, the kids get sick.”

Askew says the best way to find a way to balance family time with work is to explain what you’re doing and why it’s important.

“I take my family into the squadron all the time,” said Askew. “My son is very interested in airplanes, so I encourage that and take him out and show him the planes.

“I’d do this job for free if they fed me,” he said. “I live for flying. It’s a part of me and my wife understands that.”

Despite the hardships, there are rewards of being part of an aircrew beyond visiting exotic cultures. Like all jobs in the Air Force, crewmembers get the satisfaction of knowing their job plays a key role in a larger mission. Crews here are supporting Operation Enduring Freedom as well as continuing humanitarian and presidential support missions, and Operations Northern and Southern Watch.

“September 11 made things a lot busier, and there’s more of an urgency (to missions),” said Gaubert. “Hopefully, what we’re doing now will make things right for our kids.”

Finely added, “My son is in high school and is talking about going to the Air Force Academy. I’d like to see this war end before he goes.”

Whether they’re sitting on the flightdeck at 35,000 feet, watching the Hale-Bopp Comet go over Africa, heading west and chasing a sunset for two hours, or returning to their families in the middle of the night after 26 hours of flying, the life of the aircrew is tough, but a life airmen continue to choose, until the day they come home and stay home.



Commentary

Women in the military: Serving proudly every day

by Col. Bonnie Mertely
319th Medical Group commander

GRAND FORKS AIR FORCE BASE, N.D. (AMCNS) — Women have served honorably and heroically in the United States military since the beginning of the union.

Some have taken on legendary stature—like Molly Pitcher, who according to stories took up weapons after her husband was mortally wounded at the Battle of Monmouth.

Or Dr. Mary Walker, the only female awarded the Medal of Honor in any war. During World War I, over 300 women in the U.S. Army Signal Corps distinguished themselves again and again, and for years were even denied recognition of their service.

More recently, while on duty on Aug. 21, 1999, Sgt. 1st Class Jeanne M. Balcombe's quick thinking and selfless response safeguarded and protected others at the troop medical clinic at Camp Red Cloud, Korea. She placed herself in harm's way between three soldiers and an armed gunman. Balcombe gave her life.

Petty Officer 1st Class Margaret Lopez was working in U.S.S. Cole's oil lab when the blast hit. With burns covering her body, she helped save a shipmate, and then escaped through the hole in the side of the ship into the waters of the Port of Aden.

There are almost two million women veterans in the United States. From the American Revolution to Desert Storm to today's War on Terrorism, women have served in some way in every conflict. I am proud to count myself among them.

After serving for almost 28 years in the Air Force, my joy in this service is undiminished. From the first time I walked on Langley Air Force Base, Va., to my current role as commander of the 319th Medical Group, my pride in the Air Force and my country is unflagging.

Service for most of us in the military does not entail heroics. God willing, few of us will have to give our lives for our country. But, as for many others before me, it has been my pleasure to give 28 years of my life working as a part of a team to accomplish the mission and attain the goals of the Air Force.

During that time, I had opportunities few women in the civilian sector have ever experienced. Post Vietnam, I flew aeromedical evacuation out of the Philippines.

I've experienced engine loss immediately after take off of our C-9 Nightingale, turned around and made an emergency landing, got on another bird and continued our mission to pick up a critically ill baby. I was one of the few women to ever spend any time in Diego Garcia when it was a "men only" assignment. That particular aeromedical mission also found me climbing a rope ladder from a Navy "Mike" boat onto a Liberian freighter to pick up a critical patient.

I was the officer in charge of the emergency room in the Philippines during the earthquake, which registered 7.6 on the Richter Scale, where within two hours we converted a four-bed emergency room into a 14-bed trauma receiving center and treated over 50 critically injured Filipino nationals. I was part of the receiving site at Travis and greeted and provided medical assistance for my friends who were evacuated from the Philippines after the eruption of Mount Pinatubo. I left two weeks prior to its eruption.

At MacDill AFB, Fla., I was given the opportunity to be the first woman and nurse squadron commander of an aerospace medicine squadron. I was there when we deployed to Desert Storm and provided support to the troops on their mission to Grenada. I spent three months as the commander of the Air Expeditionary Medical Group in Haiti, providing humanitarian assistance to the people of that poverty-stricken nation.

No, life in the Air Force has certainly not been hum-drum for me. But I am not one unusual or any different from any of the thousands of American women who have chosen to serve their country in the military. We took an oath to defend our country and will uphold that oath to the best of our ability. We take pride in the job we do, and we are proud to be Americans.



Around the En Routes



Capt. Joe Bonita



Kate McIntyre

715th AMOG people take home annual base awards

HICKAM AIR FORCE BASE, Hawaii – Two people with the 715th Air Mobility Operations Group were recently recognized as top performers of the year during an annual awards banquet held here, home to Headquarters Pacific Air Forces and host unit 15th Air Base Wing.

Capt. Joe Bonita, chief of logistics, was named Hickam's Company Grader Officer of the Year, and Kate McIntyre, a comptroller with the group, earned Civilian of the Year honors (category III).

Among Bonita's accomplishments that led to his selection include: engineering the integration of \$300 million of aircraft parts into the forward supply system supporting the bed-down of 18 C-5s, 24 KC-10s, and 18 KC-135s; solving a personnel shortfall in Singapore and providing 24-hour support; and resolving a critical C-5 wheel and tire shortage, and organizing theater-wide redistribution of wheel and tire assemblies to staging locations.

McIntyre's accomplishments include: providing support for Operations Enduring Freedom and Noble Eagle expeditionary tanker aircraft bed-down at six PACAF deployed locations; helping to raise more than \$1 million in scholarship funds for underprivileged youth; and managing all Air Mobility Command financial transactions across the Pacific theater, including five operating locations.



Command visit: Gen. John W. Handy, commander-in-chief, U.S. Transportation Command, and commander, Air Mobility Command, recently visited airmen with the 728th Air Mobility Squadron at Incirlik Air Base, Turkey, to get a close-up view of the unit supporting Operation Enduring Freedom and other major events. (Top) Master Sgt. Phillip Presley briefs the general on Mobility Readiness Spares Packages, or deployable aircraft spares, and how the kits support OEF as Col. James Sturch, 721st Air Mobility Operations Group commander, looks on. (Below) Senior

Airman Crystal Thorne provides the commander the latest statistics regarding passenger movement through the base terminal in support for OEF. (Air Force photos)



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Senior Airmen Frank Hartzell (left), 715th Air Mobility Operations Group, and Robert Hensel, 735th Air Mobility Squadron, proudly display their Distinguished Graduate Awards they earned while attending the Airman Leadership School at Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii. (Air Force photo)

Pacific en route airmen earn distinguished honors

HICKAM AIR FORCE BASE, Hawaii – Two airmen assigned to Pacific en route units here walked away with Distinguished Graduate honors for excelling in all facets of course work at the Airman Leadership School.

Senior Airman Frank Hartzell, 715th Air Mobility Operations Group, and Senior Airman Robert Hensel, 735th Air Mobility Squadron, finished in the top 10 of the class, completing a grueling schedule consisting of daily lectures, two tests on leadership and management and human resource management.

They also completed three writing assignments and presented three speeches, and engaged in forums with leaders like retired Lt. Gen. William “Earl” Brown Jr., former commander of Allied Air Forces Southern Europe, and Chief Master Sgt. Dan Keane, command chief master sergeant for Air Combat Command.

“Needless to say they [Hartzell and Hensel] will be looked upon in the near future to fulfill increased roles of responsibility and leadership within their units,” said Col. Tony Phillips, 715th AMOG commander.



Frau Maria Weis

721st AMOG says goodbye to ‘Grandma’

*Capt. Doug “Badger” Mellars
721st Air Mobility Operations Group*

RAMSTEIN AIR BASE, Germany -- She’s 85 years old and only speaks German. She stands a bit over four feet in stature, but has the presence of a giant when she walks into a room.

When I come into work at 0’dark thirty, the lights are already on and the work sections in our building look great. For nearly 24 years, this was the professional work of Frau Maria Weiss.

Weis, affectionately known as “Grandma,” retired recently after serving as an interior maintenance specialist -- and friend -- for our organization since June 1978. She was a valuable part of the 721st AMOG since the day she started working with us.

Although our unit designation changed several times over the years, her service and hospitality never changed. She always smiled and lit up our mornings. On many occasions, she brought us baked goods -- including birthday cakes -- and fresh plants for the offices. She also decorated the offices on special holidays. She treated us like we were her grandchildren, and we felt privileged for the attention she gave us.

Her most memorable occasions during her many years here were during holidays when she was invited to dine with staff members. In fact, she still receives holiday cards and gifts from previous commanders.

She displayed outstanding attitude every day. When things needed to “really look sharp” for a distinguished visitor, she went the extra mile. She normally walked to work, but on special occasions, her grandson would drive her to work so she could spend an extra hour to make things look extra shiny.

It was hard for her to leave us, and it was hard for us to let her go. She has truly become an honorary member of our organization. Frau Maria, thanks for all of your service ...you will be missed!



AMC salutes

The 721st Air Mobility Operations Group annual award winners:

Airman – **Senior Airman Ray A. Taylor**, 723rd Air Mobility Squadron, Ramstein Air Base, Germany.

NCO – **Tech. Sgt. Walter J. Reed**, 723rd AMS.

Senior NCO – **Senior Master Sgt. Bruce Pate**, 725th AMS, Naval Station Rota, Spain.

First Sergeant – **Senior Master Sgt. Marcel A. Mousseau**, 727th AMS, Royal Air Force Station Mildenhall, England.

Company Grade Officer – **Capt. Scott J. Belanger**, 723rd AMS.

U.S. Civilian Category II – **Rusty S. Little**, 723rd AMS.

U.S. Civilian Category I – **Ronald C. Calloway**, 723rd AMS.

Local National Non-Supervisory – **Janet V. Harmes**, 727th AMS.

Local Nation Supervisory – **Andrea Fielding**, 727th AMS.



WARRIOR OF THE WEEK



Rank and name: Tech. Sgt. Johnny H. Williams

Job title, unit and base: Supervisor of special planning with 733rd Air Mobility Squadron at Kadena Air Base, Japan.

Brief job description: Oversees and performs joint inspections supporting special assignment airlift, and ensures timely processing and movement of special cargo such as hazardous material, mail and human remains.

Hometown: Albany, Ga.

Favorite sports team: All sports teams in Georgia.

Favorite quote: "I think I can?"

Why did you join the Air Force?: To travel.

What's the best part about being in the Air Force?: The friends I've made over the years have been the best part of my career.

Future goal: Retire.

How he exemplifies Air Force core values: "Sergeant Williams epitomizes the highest standards of service both in the Air Force and local community. His leadership was instrumental in handling a 300 percent workload increase for the squadron due to the recent runway closure at Yokota Air Base, Japan, and establishment of the 'Afghan Express' hub here. He participates in the squadron's Adopted Elementary School Program, by serving as a role model in sports day activities, student walk-a-thons and self-help classroom improvements. He has helped collect more than \$1,600 in donations for the annual Special Olympics and participates in clean-up projects for the local area's chamber of commerce."

-- Master Sgt. George B. Stickle, NCO in charge of special planning